

## The Meaning of Nature for Santiago in His Efforts to Find the Real Happiness in *The Alchemist*

**Nani Indrajani T.**

English Department, Faculty of Letters, Petra Christian University,  
Siswajilankerto 121-131, Surabaya 60236, East Java, Indonesia  
e-mail: [nitiono@peter.petra.ac.id](mailto:nitiono@peter.petra.ac.id)

**Abstract:** Santiago, the main character in the novel *The Alchemist*, is trying to find the real happiness in his life. Having dreamt of exactly the same thing twice, he wants to have his dreams come true. He is eager to find the hidden treasure that was shown in the Egyptian Pyramids in his dreams since he has the faith he will not be able to be happy and peaceful, unless he could find the hidden treasure. Using the literary philosophy theory on transcendentalism, particularly Emerson's theory written in McKinnon's (1985) book, this article discusses how nature can help Santiago in his process of finding the real happiness, namely the hidden treasure, in his life. Though he has to undergo a great deal of difficulties, threats, and dangers in his effort to find the treasure, he eventually succeeds in finding the treasure; namely the girl he loves dearly and his own happiness.

**Key words:** nature, transcendentalism, alchemist

Literary work is written to express the author's unique thought and either explicit statements or allusions frequently show an author's commitment to "a specific philosophy, or establish that he has had some direct acquaintance with philosophies once well known or at least that he is aware of their general assumptions" (Wellek & Warren, 1956, p. 111). Philosophy and literature often have an extremely close collaboration (p. 113). Philosophy and ideas that are wrapped in literature texture and is a part of literature will increase the literary artistic value because of the complexity and coherency in the literary work. Therefore, literature is often "thought of as a form of philosophy, as 'ideas' wrapped in form" (p. 110); even "there are still discussions which treat a literary work as though it were a philosophical tract" (p. 110). In the twentieth century particularly, as

Skilleås (2001) writes, “there are many examples of philosophers writing novels and poetry, or of authors philosophising” (p. 6).

Coelho’s *The Alchemist* is an example of the literary work that contains philosophical ideas. This novel “established Coelho’s worldwide reputation. The novel has already achieved the status of a universally admired modern classic. This story, considered to be timeless by many, is set to “enchant and inspire whole generations of future readers” (Paulo Coelho Bio, n.d., para. 3). *The Alchemist* was noted as one of the 20th century most important literary phenomena since Coelho entered for the second time in the Guinness Book of Records in October 2008 with his book *The Alchemist* as the most translated book in the world (in 67 languages). It has been edited in more than 150 countries and so far 35 million copies have been sold (Official Site Paulo Coelho, n.d., para. 10).

*The Alchemist* is a novel that is rich of metaphorical language and it reflects Coelho’s personal experiences in learning alchemy for eleven years. The main character, Santiago, who is willing to leave his parents and go to a foreign and faraway country just to pursue his dream, actually reflects the author who never gave up when he had difficulties in finding a publisher that was willing to publish his book.

Wellek and Warren (1956) wrote that based on Rudolf Unger’s argument, “literature is not philosophical knowledge translated into imagery and verse, but that literature expresses a general attitude towards life, ... questions which are also themes of philosophy” (p. 115). These ‘problems’ are then classified into five kinds, namely: the problem of fate (the relation of freedom and necessity, spirit and nature); the religious ‘problem’ (such as the attitude towards sin and salvation); the problem of nature (including questions about the feeling for nature, or questions of myth and magic); the problem of man (such as questions of the concept of man, man’s relation to death, man’s concept of love); and problems of society, family, and state.

The authors’ attitude is to be studied in relation to these problems and books which try to trace the history of these problems in terms of an assumed existed development have been produced.

In Coelho’s *The Alchemist*, one of the most prominent problems is the problem of nature, in which the author describes the main character’s close relationship with nature. Nature has a very deep meaning for the main character, Santiago, since nature has helped him a great deal in getting his

life's meaning and purpose. For this reason, this study discusses nature as the main focus, using the literary philosophy theory; specifically the theory on transcendentalism. This study tries to find out how nature has helped Santiago, the main character in *The Alchemist*, in the process of his efforts to find the real happiness in his life.

Transcendentalism was a reaction to the Enlightenment and was started with the transcendentalists' movement in their first meeting of "Transcendental or Hedge Club in the Boston study of George Ripley on 19 September 1836" (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 66); it is "a philosophical method, mood, and temper" (p. 67). As a historical movement, transcendentalism was limited from the mid 1830s to the late 1840s and in space to eastern Massachusetts, but its wave continued to spread through American culture (Bickman, n.d.). The transcendentalists showed a new, distinctively American, stream of thought with the ideas flowing from various sources such as Platonism, the English Romantic poets such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, and German idealism. The leading exponent of transcendentalism was Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), followed by Henry David Thoreau (1817-1872). A great deal of writers at that time was inspired by the Emerson and Thoreau's trend of philosophy and literature so that everything that is included in intuitionist thought popularly was called transcendental at that time. "Transcendentalism, then, is not as much concerned with a metaphysics that transcends our daily lives but rather with a new view of the mind that replaces Locke's empiricist, materialistic, and passive model with one emphasizing the role of the mind itself in actively shaping experience" (Brulatour, 1999, para. 3).

In Emerson's essay *The Transcendentalist* as explained by MacKinnon (1985), he defines the term 'transcendentalism' as synonymous with 'idealism' – "a way of regarding will, thought, inspiration, and miracle as the real – in opposition to what the materialist takes as real, namely fact, history, animal wants, and force of circumstances" (p. 70). It is similar to when he differentiates between 'reason' as rationality and 'Reason' as the synchronicity of heart and mind, "he uses the upper case 'I' with intent; what he refers to is not goodhearted but somewhat naive optimism; it is a complete and rather complex philosophy which, he said, borrows from the best of the oldest ideas" (Brulatour, 1999, para. 1). Selection refers to individual's decision which has impact on the rest of the world and the individual is the world in microcosm (para. 2). In his book *Nature* (1836), Emerson showed "a

vision of the complex relationship among man, nature, and language” (Woodlief, n.d., para. 1). It is undeniable that nature is valuable in itself (e.g. for its beauty, serenity, etc.), but “its true importance lies in its symbolism: the outward signs of Nature represent inner harmony and spiritual well-being” (Brulatour, 1999, para. 9) and the transcendentalists believe that there is an exchange between nature and the human spirit. Human’s connection with nature is essential for the growth of his intellect, aesthetic, and moral health so that s/he “must see and experience nature intimately, whether defined as the “not-me” or as landscape, to participate in the unity of Spirit underlying its visible processes. This connectedness is the basis of the self-reliance which determines how a person lives with integrity in nature and society” (Woodlief, 1990, para 1). Thus, “natural fact” conveys a corresponding “spiritual fact” (Bickman, n.d., para. 14).

There are three basic themes in the transcendentalists’ writings: “the divinity of nature, the worth of the individual person, and the capacity of each person to know the truth directly” (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 68). MacKinnon explains further that according to the transcendentalists, nature, which possesses soul, is a world that is alive qualitatively, full of novelty, growth, and surprises. Nature symbolizes and expresses the “one divine spirit that pervades all things. This spirit is within man as an immanent principle of both being and knowledge” (p. 68); it is the divine’s spark within each individual. The concept that

each person possessed divine intuitive powers. Through the exercise of these powers the individual was thought to be able to know nature, not as a collection of facts fragmented by sensation and then reassembled by science, but through a poetic, creative knowledge of nature’s understanding conformity to the powers of the mind. Such knowledge transcends sense experience (p. 68).

is crucial for the transcendentalists and becomes the basis of their doctrine of self-trust.

MacKinnon (1985) wrote that Emerson in his essay entitled *Nature*, explains that nature is best known by someone who goes out to meet it as a lover, not by a passive observer (p. 69). People can have sympathy toward nature since they have moods similar to its moods. Philosophically, the universe consists of Nature and the Soul; “Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf”

(American Transcendentalism Web, n.d., para. 5). There are very few adult people that can see nature or they only have a superficial seeing. A truly nature lover is someone whose “inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows” (para. 9). For Emerson, the instrument to reveal the truth is revelation rather than logic (Leary, n.d.). Emerson himself had a mystical experience of uniting with nature, an experience in which he feels as “part or particle of God” (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 69).

For Emerson, nature is the image, the analog of God; therefore, the goodness, beauty, mystery of nature are similar to the ones belong to God. Nature is God’s means to reveal His plan to man; yet, what people can see in nature is only partial truth, a final truth shadow that can be revealed merely when man can find it. Emerson believes that nature has various functions, that is, as “commodity, beauty, language, discipline, idealism, spirit and prospects” (pp. 75-80).

Nature as commodity gives benefits to people and eventhough the benefit is only temporary, it is the only benefit that can be seen by all human beings and it is perfect. Nature as beauty is the second service of nature for men to fulfill man’s nobler want called the love of beauty. The Greeks called the world (kosmos) as beauty. Because of the plastic power of the human eye, the primary forms such as the sky, the mountain, the tree, and the animal give man pleasure in and for themselves. The delight rises from color, motion, outline, and grouping, so the simple perception of the natural forms is the delight for human beings; thus, the eye can be considered as the best of artists. The beauty of nature can be seen as well when it becomes an object of the intellect so nature is related to virtue and thought. The natural beauty reforms itself in the mind. The world exists so that the soul could satisfy the desire of beauty.

The third benefit that nature provides for men is as language. “Nature is the vehicle of thought, and in a simple, double, and three-fold degree. Words are signs of natural facts” (p. 77). The fourth benefit of nature for men is that nature disciplines them, train their mind and character to restrain and to be obedient. Nature also functions as idealism and this is the fifth benefit that nature gives to men. There is a doubt of whether nature outwardly exists; however, it does not matter whether objectively the World exists or not since subjectively people believe it does and that is all

that is matter. The sixth function of nature for human being is nature as Spirit; it is because nature always talks about Spirit and it teaches man about himself and his connection to Spirit so that man can feel God in and out of himself. The last function of nature for man is as prospects in which via nature, man could see that a dream might let him deeper into the secret of nature than a hundred concerted experiments.

## **THE REAL HAPPINESS SANTIAGO SEEKS**

Santiago is a character that persistently attempts to find his real happiness. In the beginning of the novel, he is described as a man that is unsatisfied with his condition since he feels something is missing in his life and he has to search for it. Though his father can fulfill his material needs. As a shepherd boy, he is not lack for wealth since his father has enough sheep, but he is always disturbed by his dreams and thinks that “it’s the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting (Coelho, 2002, p. 11). Santiago dreamt that a child took him by both hands and transported him to the Egyptian Pyramids, telling him that he would find a hidden treasure if he came there, but as the child was about to show him the exact location, he woke up (p. 14).

Santiago’s dreams about the hidden treasure have caused him to feel nervous and uneasy since he has dreamt it twice; thus, he really wants to know the meaning of his dream. The dream makes him feel something is missing in his life, that is, his essential spiritual needs that he has to fulfill, the pure happiness in his heart. To find this happiness, he is willing to do anything through life difficulties and is willing to lose his precious things that hinder the achievement of his happiness. He has decided to leave his house and family to roam alone, though his father reluctantly permits him. To get an insignificant interpretation of his dream from an old Gypsy woman, he has promised to pay “one-tenth of the treasure” (p. 14) if he finds the treasure; he also promised to give Melchizedek one-tenth of his sheep if he wants to be told where he could find the hidden treasure in his dreams. It can be seen when Melchizedek tells Santiago: “Tomorrow, at this same time, bring me a tenth of your flock. And I will tell you how to find the hidden treasure” (p. 26) and “the next day, the boy met the old man at noon. He brought six sheep with him” (p. 29). This shows that actually Santiago is really eager to make his dream comes true, that is, to find his hidden treasure, though he still does not know whether the Egyptian

Pyramids shown to him in his dreams and by Melchizedek were the right location and whether there is really a hidden treasure for him. If there is, he also does not know what exactly it is. Losing one-tenth of his flock is just the beginning of his sacrifice in his effort to get the hidden treasure and he even has to lose his wealth twice later: all the money he brought was taken by a stranger when he first arrived in Africa, and the gold he got from the Alchemist was robbed when he arrived at the Egyptian Pyramids, the place where he believes his treasure is hidden. Since Santiago hopes to find his hidden treasure very much, he is extremely excited when he knows where his treasure is: "... his heart bursting with joy. Because now he knew where his treasure was" (p. 172). He is sure that the hidden treasure is not at the Egyptian Pyramids since when he looked once more at the Pyramids, "they seemed to laugh at him, and he laughed back" (p. 172); it is in the place where the leader of the robbers has dreamt and told him. Santiago believes that the robbers leader's dream about hidden treasure is actually a hint for himself about his own treasure, and the place is near his own house.

Although Santiago has to wander and cross the vast desert in his effort to find the hidden treasure in the form of materials which eventually turns out to be near his own house, he has patiently done all the hints he could get and overcome all the spectacles, including the ones that threaten his own life. "In his pursuit of the dream, he was being constantly subjected to tests of his persistence and courage. So he could not be hasty, nor impatient. If he pushed forward impulsively, he would fail to see the signs and omens left by God along his path" (p. 93). He does all of these since he is sure that he will get the real happiness. It is right that finally Santiago succeeds to find the treasure, "a chest of Spanish gold coins. There were also precious stones, gold masks adorned with red and white feathers, and stone statues embedded with jewels. The spoils of a conquest that the country had long ago forgotten, and that some conquistador and failed to tell his children about" (p. 176); however, the idea of the hidden treasure is far deeper than just the valuable materials such as gold and jewelry. The pursuing of the treasure he gets in his dream has brought Santiago to the desert and it was the time when he was in the desert that he met Fatima, the desert girl and finally they love each other. This meeting has made Fatima as part of Santiago's treasure, part of his dreams as Fatima tells him:

"You have told me about your dreams, about the old king and your treasure. And you've told me about omens. So now, I fear nothing,

because it was those omens that brought you to me. And I am a part of your dream, a part of your destiny, as you call it.”

“... the dunes are changed by the wind, but the desert never changes. That’s the way it will be with our love for each other.”

“*Maktub*,” she said. “If I am really a part of your dream, you’ll come back one day.” (p. 102).

It shows that the essence of Santiago’s hidden treasure is not merely the wealth such as jewels and gold, but it is more than that. He has found the most invaluable treasure of his life, that is, the love between him and Fatima as he says to Fatima: “I’m going to wait here for you every day. I have crossed the desert in search of a treasure that is somewhere near the Pyramids, and for me, the war seemed a curse. But now it’s a blessing, because it brought me to you.” (p. 100).

Santiago’s obstacles in the desert such as the war between the tribes when he is seeking the hidden treasure could have caused him to stop his effort in finding the hidden treasure, yet he is not disturbed at all by the obstacles. He knows that his meeting with Fatima has become his destiny and “Fatima was more important than his treasure” (p. 100) since Fatima is like a pure gold, like what the alchemist says: “If what one finds is made of pure matter, it will never spoil. And one can always come back. If what you had found was only a moment of light, like the explosion of a star, you would find nothing on your return.” (p. 130). Though the alchemist is speaking the language of alchemy, Santiago knows that the alchemist is “referring to Fatima” (p. 130).

Santiago eventually succeeds in finding both his destiny, that is, the invaluable treasure-Fatima as his future wife, and his literal hidden treasure, that is, the gold and jewels. His dreams have led him to the Egyptian pyramids to find Fatima and since he has persistently pursued his destiny, he also has found the hidden gold and jewelries so “it’s true; life really is generous to those who pursue their destiny” (p. 176). It also shows that “everything is written in the Soul of the World, and there it will stay forever” (p. 130). Santiago can feel that Fatima is always waiting for him to come to her and he knows that she is waiting faithfully at the desert:

The wind began to blow again. It was the levanter, the wind that came from Africa. It didn’t bring with it the smell of the desert, nor the threat of Moorish invasion. Instead, it brought the scent of a perfume



he knew well, and the touch of a kiss – a kiss that came from far away, slowly, slowly, until it rested on his lips. ... “I’m coming, Fatima,” he said (p. 177).

The quotation shows that Santiago has succeeded in finding his real happiness, namely, his life destiny. Because he keeps believing that when someone is in pursuit of his destiny, “the entire universe made an effort to help him succeed” (p. 95), his efforts are not in vain. It is true that his meeting with Fatima is already written in the Soul of the World or it is already ‘*Maktub*’ (p. 121) or determined, but the desert gives him “an understanding of the world; in fact, anything on the face of the earth will do that” (p. 134). This shows that Santiago’s success is also supported by the help of desert and the other parts of nature. Thus, the next part will discuss about how the nature can help Santiago in his process of finding his real happiness.

## **HOW NATURE HELPS SANTIAGO IN HIS PROCESS OF SEEKING HIS REAL HAPPINESS**

Based on the seven benefits of nature for man as described in MacKinnon (1985), there are also seven benefits of nature that has helped Santiago in his process of finding his pure happiness. The seven benefits of nature are nature as commodity, beauty, discipline, idealism, spirit, and prospects.

### **Nature as Commodity**

In the process of finding the happiness, Santiago gets the benefit of nature. Nature has fulfilled its function as commodity for him, that is, as his foods, clothes, and shelter. Though in transcendentalism idea, the function of nature as commodity is in the lowest place of the order of the benefits nature can give to men since it only deals with man’s physical benefit, yet, for Santiago, this function of nature as commodity is as essential as the other functions that nature could give to him. Nature has well taken care his life while he has to wander far from his house and to cross the desert so that he can keep healthy and strong in his struggle to find the real happiness.

Nature has provided Santiago with foods that he needs, both when he still becomes a shepherd and when he is in the desert. For the first time he

becomes a shepherd, nature has satisfied him when he feels thirsty, such as when he is on the way to the rich merchant to sell his wool: "he drank a bit from the wine that remained from his dinner of the night before" (Coelho, 2002, p. 7). Here the wine that he drinks is from grapes or nature and it helps him relieve his thirst. It also happens when he has met the old Gypsy woman; he is very disappointed since the old woman does not know how to make his dream comes true, thus once more he drinks his wine and "the wine was refreshing" (p. 16). The wine that is part of nature has refreshed his mind so that he can forget his disappointment and goes on looking for the happiness he wants to achieve.

When he is at the desert, nature also functions as his commodity. Though the only trees that can grow there are only date trees, these trees have given him food and shelter, while the oases which are surrounded by the palm trees provide water for his drink. "The boy couldn't believe what he was seeing: the oasis, rather than being just a well surrounded by a few palm trees. ... There were three hundred wells, fifty thousand date trees ..." (p. 92). The oases and the palm trees are a refugee from the war for Santiago and all the caravan groups since there was a war between the tribes there. "The vision of the date palms ... signified shade, water, and a refugee from the war" (p. 90); furthermore, the oases are "... as places of refuge. ... The group was to remain there at the oasis until the conflict between the tribes was over" (p. 92). Thus, here nature which is represented by the date trees and the oases have given their support for Santiago in his process of finding his life destiny.

Nature also helps him to get food and water for his sheep flock, as can be seen in this quotation: "the boy knew how to find the best pastures in Andalusia" (p. 7). The availability of the green pastures and the fresh water from the river to feed his sheep means that nature helps Santiago as commodity for his sheep. The pasture also becomes his bed since he often lies down on it when he takes a rest, so it is like what MacKinnon (1985) states that "beasts, fire, water, stones, and corn serve (man). The field is at once his floor, his work-yard, his play-ground, his garden, and his bed" (p. 76). It is true for Santiago because the pastures function as everything for him, as his floor, work-yard to feed his sheep, play-ground with the sheep, garden and bed as well. Thus, nature as commodity has the function as "food, clothes, and shelter" (p. 76) for Santiago.

As a shepherd, the sheep is an asset for Santiago; it is his wealth and he really needs it in his effort to find the hidden treasure; for example, to

get the information about the location of the treasure from Melchizedek, he has to pay by giving ten sheep to Melchizedek; otherwise, he will not get any information.

Besides as the only asset that Santiago has, the flock of sheep is also part of the nature itself and this flock of sheep itself takes part in being commodity for Santiago. He sells the wool to get some money (Coelho, 2002, pp. 5-6). He even sells the sheep as well and “the sale of his sheep had left him with enough money in his pouch, and the boy knew that in money there was magic; whoever has money is really never alone. Before long, maybe in just a few days, he would be at the Pyramids” (p. 36).

In its function as commodity and in its ministry to man, nature is not only the material, but is also the process and the result” (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 76) in the sense that all parts of nature continuously work into each other’s hands for man’s profit. Thus “the wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man” (p. 76). For Santiago, nature is not only as material, but also a process and it works together to help him through his efforts in seeking the treasure: the pastures provide food for the sheep, the sheep provide money for Santiago, and the money is the means for Santiago to start his journey to find the treasure.

The other part of nature, the top of a hill where the crystal shop is, a place where Santiago has worked during his staying in Africa, has indirectly contributed as commodity for Santiago. The shop location which is on top of a hill gives Santiago an idea to convince his boss to sell tea in crystal glasses, an idea that never comes to the boss’ mind. He has made the crystal shop successful and the success of the sale makes him get a good salary from the boss so that he could have enough money to go to the Egyptian Pyramids, a place in his dreams (Coelho, 2002, pp. 61-63).

The discussion here shows that nature’s benefit as commodity for Santiago has helped him a lot in his process of finding his hidden treasure. This benefit that nature provides for Santiago is perfect and it is the only benefit of nature that can be understood by all human beings.

### **Nature as Beauty**

When man’s body and mind are tired of work, nature is a remedy that can restore the freshness of the body and mind although the beauty of

nature that can be seen and felt as beauty is the least part of the nature. "The shows of day, the dewy morning, the rainbow, mountains, orchards in blossom, stars, shadows in still water, if too eagerly hunted, become shows merely, and mock us with their unreality. The presence of a higher, namely, of spiritual element is essential to its perfection. ... Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue" (MacKinnon, 1985, p.76) and the universe belongs to each individual who lives in it. Therefore, there is no single reason can be given for the question why the soul seeks beauty.

For Santiago, nature has also given him the benefit as beauty and has helped him to have physical and mental freshness, especially when he has felt tired and discouraged in his attempt to find his real happiness. Because of this benefit from nature, he could keep on pursuing the real happiness as his hidden treasure in his dreams or his life destiny. Santiago can feel the extraordinary beauty of nature when he and the caravan group arrive at the oasis: "The boy couldn't believe what he was seeing: the oasis, rather than being just a well surrounded by a few palm trees ... was much larger than many towns back in Spain" (Coelho, 2002, p. 91). When he sees the beauty of the immense oasis, the palm and date trees, he feels encouraged to pursue his dreams and believes he would find it. When he could feel and see the beauty of the nature, in fact he could also see the different face of God that is the same as the truth, the kindness and the beauty of all. It is as "one expression for the universe; Truth, and goodness, and beauty, are but different faces of the same All" (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 77). It is because nature is "the gigantic shadow of God cast on the senses" (Leary, n.d.). This beauty of nature has also reminds him to act persistently and courageously since "if he pushed forward impulsively, he would fail to see the signs and omens left by God along his path (Coelho, 2002, p. 93).

### **Nature as Language**

In its service as language for Santiago, nature helps him a lot, especially when he is confused and cannot make a prompt decision. He has got two stones from Melchizedek, a white stone and a black one called "Urim and Thummin" (p. 31). The black signifies 'yes', the white 'no' and when Santiago is unable to read the omens, he can ask the stones and he has to ask an objective question. These two stones are natural stones, so they can be considered as nature representative and since they function to answer objective questions, they seem to be able to speak to Santiago and gives the service as language, though there are only two answers, yes or no.

The two stones have helped Santiago in making a decision several times when he is desperated and cannot see the omens. After his money was stolen in Africa, for example, Santiago did not have money anymore and he almost gave up in finding his treasure when he found the two stones in his pocket, the only things that have left besides a jacket a thick book. Yet, finding the stones made him cheer up since he felt as if he still had precious things and a friend on his way to the Egyptian Pyramids. He wanted to know whether Melchizedek still accompanied him and “so, he asked if the old man’s blessing was still with him. He took out one of the stones. It was “yes”. ... and that made him feel more confident” (pp. 43-44). The stone has spoken to him and he confidently goes on his journey. As stated by McKinnon (1985), nature gives man description and man translates it into words; here as if the two stones tries to describe something to Santiago and he translates it into words, ‘yes’ and ‘no’. In other event, when he was doubtful whether to go on toward the Pyramids after he had left the crystal shop, “he held Urim and Thummim in his hand; because of those two stones, he was once again on the way to his treasure” (Coelho, 2002, p. 68).

The other nature’s service as language that Santiago experiences is when he is able to communicate well with a candy seller though the seller speaks Arabic and Santiago speaks Spanish. Therefore, Santiago realizes “there must be a language that doesn’t depend on words. I’ve already had that experience with my sheep, and now it’s happening with people. ... If I can learn to understand this language without words, I can learn to understand the world. ... in that strange land, he was applying the same lessons he had learned with his sheep” (p. 46). It might happen because of the universal soul called Reason to which all men belong and man, including Santiago, is aware of the universal soul within or behind his individual life so that with the help of nature, men – and Santiago as well – can communicate with anyone.

Besides, the levanter – the wind that came from Africa, the sheep, the desert, the hawk all speak to him in a language without words that he understands and “once again he was experiencing the language without words ... the universal language” (p. 80). When Santiago has met Melchizedek, the king of Salem, he gets confused since he has to choose “between something he had become accustomed to and something he wanted to have” (p. 29). He has to decide whether he has to sell his sheep to pursue the hidden treasure in his dream or he still becomes a shepherd.

At the same time the levanter blows and it “was still getting stronger, and he felt its force on his face. That wind had brought the Moors, yes, but it had also brought the smell of the desert and of veiled women. It had brought with it the sweat and the dreams of men who had once left to search for the unknown, and for gold and adventure – and for the Pyramids” (p. 29).

In Emerson’s theory, it is said that nature is the symbol of spirit and natural fact conveys a corresponding spiritual fact (Bickman, n.d., para. 14). In the quotation, the levanter that blows strongly on Santiago’s face seems like a language that expresses his unrested spirit. The levanter that has brought the Moors is also ready to bring him to his destiny, so he has to make an immediate decision. Words are signs of natural facts since every word used to express moral and intellectual facts, if it is traced back to the roots, it turns out to be taken from material appearance, such as ‘raising eyebrows’ expresses ‘haughtiness’, ‘heart’ expresses ‘feeling’, ‘head’ expresses ‘mind’, and so on. Here the levanter signifies Santiago’s language of love since this wind has brought him to Egypt to meet Fatima, a girl that he never knows before, but she is the one that encourages him to find the treasure and finally becomes his wife. The wind reminds him of the same wind when he was still a shepherd in Tarifa: “And the boy sat there by the well for a long time, remembering that one day in Tarifa the levanter had brought to him the perfume of that woman, and realizing that he had loved her before he even knew she existed” (Coelho, 2002, p. 99).

The sheep has taught Santiago an important thing, that is, the language that can be understood by everybody in the world. “It was the language of enthusiasm, of things accomplished with love and purpose, and as part of a search for something believed in and desired” (p. 64). Having the work as a shepherd, Santiago cannot be lazy; he has to walk with the flock of sheep to find green and fresh pastures and he has to get up early so that the weather is not too hot. Therefore, he could say that the sheep has educated him about the language of enthusiasm. This language of enthusiasm is essential for Santiago when he has to pursue for his treasure later. When he works at the crystal shop, he also uses the language of enthusiasm since he knows that his idea of selling tea in the crystal cups will be attract a lot of buyers and it turns out to be right. From his work in this crystal shop, he could save a lot of money that he uses to go the Pyramids. Because of the language of enthusiasm that Santiago has learnt from nature, he dares to quit from the crystal shop to continue seeking his

destiny and to be enthusiastic that he will be successful. Thus, the sheep that represent nature have given its service as language of enthusiasm for Santiago and has helped him in his process of finding the treasure.

In other time, nature tells Santiago that there would be a war between tribes when he is in the desert. Santiago is able to catch the language of nature via “a pair of hawks flying high in the sky” (p. 104) on the desert as a natural fact that symbolizes the coming war. “Suddenly, one of the hawks made a flashing dive through the sky, attacking the other. As it did so, a sudden, fleeting image came to the boy: an army, with its swords at the ready, riding into the oasis. The vision vanished immediately, but it had shaken him” (p. 105). Santiago could sense a certain meaning in the fight of the hawks because he already learns the language that nature gives to him, that is, “the Language of the World” (p. 105). He knows that at that time the desert was safe, but the oasis was dangerous since the enemy would attack from the oasis; something that never happens there since the tradition says that an oasis is a neutral territory and no one attacks an oasis. He succeeds in convincing the tribal chieftain about the coming attack and would get a piece of gold for every ten dead men among the enemies, but he would be killed if his prognostication is not right. It turns out that Santiago can interpret the language of nature since the benefit of nature as language for Santiago has caused him to act rightly at the exact time so that he finally could save the entire caravan and the community in the desert. Santiago is not a passive observer of nature. He associates with nature well, loves nature, and always tries to catch what nature wants to say to him so that he knows about “the Soul of the World” (p. 111) and “the boy was already used to the Language of the World” (p. 112). It is as MacKinnon (1985), wrote: “nature is known best not by the passive observer, but by the person who goes out to meet it as a lover” (p. 69).

The natural facts that serve as a language have given essential meanings in Santiago’s life. The desert that he has to cross in his effort to find the treasure, talks about the difficulties he has to face so that when he does not try to find it seriously, he will not be able to get it. Every thing that is seen in nature is related to the state of mind that can be described using the natural appearance as its picture. The date palms “signified shade, water, and a refuge from the war. ... the camel’s groan signaled danger” (Coelho, 2002, p. 90), while oasis which signals “neutral territory” (p. 113) also talks about love since in this oasis Santiago’s love is responded by Fatima.

## **Nature as Discipline**

Santiago has learned a lot from nature that has disciplined him. As a shepherd, he has learned from nature to be ready to face the changing of climate and weather so that he could lead his sheep in all conditions. When “the day was dawning, and the shepherd urged his sheep in the direction of the sun” (p. 6) because “he knew that a few hours from now, with the sun at its zenith, the heat would be so great that he would not be able to lead his flock across the fields” (p. 7). He cannot be reluctant to get up early in the morning, but he should be ready to face the cold weather and take his flock of sheep to the fields. Then he had to “wait until the sun had sunk a bit lower in the sky before following his flock back through the fields” (p. 16). Thus he has to discipline himself to bring his jacket though it is a bit heavy; otherwise, he cannot stand the cold and hot weather. “We have to be prepared for change, he thought, and he was grateful for the jacket’s weight and warmth” (p. 8).

As a shepherd, Santiago is used to be in the open air, in the wide fields with his flock of sheep and he feels very close to his sheep. Because of his closeness to his sheep, he learns more from his sheep than from books (p. 5) as he has admitted himself. He has to remember the time to shear his sheep as well so that he can get money from the selling of the wool. All of these show that Santiago can discipline himself well – to be punctual and to provide for his own needs.

MacKinnon (1985, p. 78) states that space, time, society, climate, food, animal, and mechanical force give the purest lesson with unlimited meaning to human beings. They give lesson about the Understanding and the Reason. This is reflected in Santiago’s life in which nature, such as the climate and the sheep, has educated him about life, gives understanding of something and the reason why. It is seen when he was still being a shepherd in Andalusia: “... during the time the boy had spent in the fields of Andalusia, he had become used to learning which path he should take by observing the ground and the sky. He had discovered that the presence of a certain bird meant that a snake was nearby, and that a certain shrub was a sign that there was water in the area. The sheep had taught him that” (Coelho, 2002, pp. 36-37). MacKinnon (1985) states that “sensible objects conform to the premonitions of Reason and reflect the conscience. All things are moral, and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature” (p. 78). Nature gives form to man; for nature,



yes means yes and no means no. The life that is in unity with nature and the closeness with the sheep have given understanding to Santiago to be able to walk with the sheep safely and have trained his conscience to make the right choice.

In its service as discipline, nature gives moral influence to every individual and the influence is a number of truths being illustrated to the individual. During his journey in the Sahara desert, Santiago gets a lesson of discipline from the desert. The difficulties he has to face together with the caravan demand everyone's discipline and obedience to the rules since "in the desert, disobedience means death" (Coelho, 2002, p. 74). For example, the caravan moves toward the east, travels only during the morning, halts when the sun is at its strongest, and resumes late in the afternoon. At night, especially when there is danger because of the enemy, they have to extinguish their fire though the desert nights are very cold (p. 131). Santiago has to discipline himself to obey all of the caravan leader's instruction if he wants to achieve his goal of life.

From the discussion, it is seen that nature does not only discipline and train Santiago's mind, but it also trains his character to restrain and to be obedient because "the desert tests all men: it challenges every step, and kills those who become distracted" (p. 117). The desert has taught him to control his emotion, since he has to listen to the caravan leader's instructions. "The moral influence of nature upon every individual is that amount of truth which it illustrates to him" (McKinnon, 1985, p. 79). The sheep and the desert have taught him the truth about the importance of disciplining himself and obeying his own conscience; a lesson that he needs so that finally he could find his destiny.

### **Nature as Idealism**

In the benefit of nature as idealism, nature acts together with spirit to set free man. God teaches human mind and "makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade" (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 79) and idealism sees the world in God. For Santiago, nature as idealism has helped him in making the right decision since nature has taught him that "when someone makes a decision, he is really diving into a strong current that will carry him to places he had never dreamed of when he first made the decision" (Coelho, 2002, p. 71). Just like the congruent sensations, he knows that in

all the decisions he has to make, there must be some negative and positive things that he does not know, and he learns this from nature such as and when he is still a shepherd, he learns that if he brings his jacket he will have difficulties carrying the heavy thing but if he does not bring it, he will not be able to stand the cold weather.

When he is sure of his destiny, a mysterious force might come up and convince him that it would be impossible to realize his destiny. Thus, in the process of seeking out his destiny, there are times when Santiago feels hopeless and thinks it would be impossible to find it such as when he was in Africa after a stranger had taken away all of his money. It is seen in what he says: “and I’m going to hold on to what little I have, because I’m too insignificant to conquer the world” (p. 41). Yet Santiago is not a person that easily gives up because he is sure that “when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it” (p. 42). Taking this statement from Melchizedek as his idealism, Santiago is able to get new spirit to get up and goes on seeking out his destiny until he succeeds to reach it. He is sure that “everything in life is an omen” (p. 72); therefore, he just learns to recognize the omens and follows them such as what Melchizedek has advised him. Having this principle of life, though he is only a stranger in a completely new area for him, he starts once more to earn money by working at the crystal shop and it turns out that he eventually succeeds in his effort. All the benefits from nature as idealism for Santiago has become important lessons for him so that he is able to make the right decisions in his time of difficulties during the process of finding his destiny until eventually he reaches it.

### **Nature as Spirit**

Nature always speaks of spirit, giving an impression of an absolute thing. As what is said by the Englishman to Santiago about Santiago’s success in the crystal shop: “everything on the face of the earth had a soul, whether mineral, vegetable, or animal – or even just a simple thought. ... the earth is alive ... and it has a soul. We are part of that soul, so we rarely recognize that it is working for us” (p. 82). Santiago’s success in the crystal shop refers to nature’s benefit for him, that is, the natural location of the shop has given him an idea to earn more money so that he can be successful in getting his hidden treasure and this success is called as the “beginner’s luck” (p. 55), since it was his initial effort in earning money.

Since Santiago is serious in his effort to get money to be able to find his hidden treasure, it seems that he always finds the right way because nature that functions as spirit to him has given him a positive force to try anything that might give financial benefit to him. It is as what the Englishman says to him:

there is one great truth on this planet: whoever you are, or whatever it is that you do, when you really want something, it's because that desire originated in the soul of the universe. It's your mission on earth (p. 23).

when you want something with all your heart, that's when you are closest to the Soul of the World. It's always a positive force (p. 82).

So his success in the crystal shop is also because of nature's service as spirit for him in which nature has become "the symbol of spirit" (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 77). Although he might not realize, even the glasses were collaborating in his success as positive force for him to make further progress (Coelho, 2002, p. 82).

Another event that shows the help of nature as spirit for Santiago is when Santiago has to transform himself into the wind. On the way to the Egyptian Pyramids, when Santiago and the alchemist were accused as spies and arrested by the soldiers in a nearby military camp, the alchemist had succeeded to convince the chief of the soldiers that Santiago was an alchemist, someone that could transform himself into the wind and promised the chief of the soldiers that Santiago would perform it in front of the soldiers. This challenge had made Santiago very frightened since he actually was not an alchemist and did not know how to transfer himself into the wind and if he could not do that, he would be killed by the soldiers. Yet since he was sure that when he wanted something, the entire universe conspired in helping him to achieve it, he finally succeeded to talk to the sands in the desert, the wind, and the sun, asking them to help him transfer himself into the wind. His conversation to the sands can be seen in the quotation that follows:

"Somewhere you are holding the person I love," the boy said. "So when I look out over your sands, I am also looking at her. I want to return to her, and I need your help so that I can turn myself into the wind" (p. 152).

Then it told him, "I'll give you my sands to help the wind to low, but, alone, I can't do anything. You have to ask for help from the wind" (p. 153).

Here it can be seen that Santiago can sense nature as spirit that is always present behind the nature and through the nature. He also knows that the desert sensed his fear since both of them speaks the same language. All things in nature are created by just the same one hand, the hand of the Almighty; therefore, all have the same spirit and nature is also as spirit for Santiago. Spirit is present behind and throughout nature and it is only one, not compound; it acts upon man spiritually or through man. The Spirit which is considered as the "Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws, at his need, inexhaustible power" (p. 80). It is also seen in his conversation with the wind about the secret of the alchemist and asks it to help him: "I learned the alchemist's secrets in my travels. I have inside me the winds, the deserts, the oceans, the stars, and everything created in the universe. We were all made by the same hand, and we have the same soul. I want to be like you, able to ... blow away the sands that cover my treasure, and carry the voice of the woman I love" (p. 154). His strong belief that nature and he himself have the same soul has enabled him to speak not just to the sands and the wind but also to the sun, asking it to help him find transform himself into the wind: "I want you to help me turn myself into the wind," the boy answered" (p. 159) so that he could find his destiny, the girl he loves, Fatima as quoted here. Santiago's ability to speak to the sands, the wind, and the sun is a proof that he can speak "the Language of the World" (p. 159) and that all of them belong to "the Soul of the World" (p. 158).

The sands, the wind, and the sun could not transform Santiago into the wind because he has to "speak to the hand that wrote all" (p. 159) and it is "that only the hand could perform miracles, or transform the sea into a desert ... or a man into the wind" (p. 160). Nevertheless, nature gives its service as spirit to Santiago has been proved here, the same as his belief he gets from Melchizedek that when someone wants something, the entire universe conspires in helping him to achieve it. As has been discussed in the theoretical framework above, the Spirit which is considered as the

‘Supreme Being’, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us.

The *simum* blew that day as it had never blown before. ... When the *simum* ceased to blow, everyone looked to the place where the boy had been, but he was no longer there; he was standing next to a sand-covered sentinel, on the far side of the camp. The men were terrified at his sorcery. But there were two people who were smiling: the alchemist, because he had found his perfect disciple, and the chief, because that disciple had understood the glory of God (p. 161).

Here it could be seen that nature – the sands, the wind, and the sun – as spirit has helped Santiago in his process to realize his real happiness, finding his hidden treasure, not only in the form of wealth, but more than that, that is, finding Fatima, his lover.

### **Nature as Prospect**

Nature has given its service as prospect to Santiago by helping him to realize his real happiness. Santiago has been successful in reaching “through the Soul of the World, and saw that it was a part of the Soul of God. And he saw that the Soul of God was his own soul. And that he, a boy, could perform miracles” (p. 160). Santiago’s success in transforming himself as the wind is the climax of the novel *The Alchemist*, since not everybody could do the same thing as what he does. The ones that could do it are only those that understand the language of the World and could listen to the sound of nature through his heart. However, the most important thing for Santiago is that his communication with the sands, the wind, and the sun has brought him deeper into the secret of nature that becomes a prospect for him. All of them have worked together so that he could transform himself into the wind, if not, he surely has been killed by the chief of the soldiers. Santiago who has become the best read naturalist that has a sincere attention to truth, “will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, but is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility” (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 80). Nature which is represented by the sands, the wind, and the sun have helped him to find his real happiness, his

destiny, that is, the real hidden treasure namely the love of Fatima. However, behind all this good nature-networking, it is only the Almighty's hand that determines his success.

## CONCLUSION

Though it is difficult for Santiago to find his real happiness that becomes his destiny and he has to pass through a long and complicated process, he always focuses on his destiny until he finds what he is pursuing. Santiago, a shepherd, has succeeded in finding his hidden treasure that is not only in material form, the gold and jewels, but more than that, he finds his lover, Fatimah. The essential thing is although he could not find "God in the seminary" (p. 10), at the end of the novel he is successful in reaching through the Soul of the World and sees himself as part of the Soul of God and also sees that the Soul of God is his own soul (p. 160). He learns all of these from his closeness with nature so that it can be said that nature has given various meanings to him. From the discussion above, the there main focuses of transcendentalism, namely the divinity of nature, the worth of the individual person, and the capacity of each person to know the truth directly could be seen clearly. Santiago finally realizes that he possesses divine intuitive power and his soul has been transcended.

## REFERENCES

- American Transcendentalism Web. (n.d.). Retrieved November 17, 2009, from <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/nature.html>
- Bickman, M. (n.d.). *An overview of American transcendentalism*. Retrieved November 12, 2009 from [ttp://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/ideas/definitionbickman.html](http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/ideas/definitionbickman.html).
- Brulatour, M., (1999). *Heaven on earth: Is the legacy of 19th century transcendentalism an ecumenical philosophy of nature?* Retrieved November 12, 2009, from <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/roots/legacy/bud.html#Buddhist>.
- Coelho, P. (2002). *The alchemist*. London: HarperCollins.
- Katsoff, L. O. (2004). *Pengantar filsafat [Introduction to philosophy]*. (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana Yogya.

- Leary, L. (n.d.). *Ralph Waldo Emerson: An interpretive essay*. Retrieved November 20, 2009, from <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/natintro.html>.
- MacKinnon, B. (1985). *American philosophy: A historical anthology*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Official Site Paulo Coelho. (n.d.). Retrieved November 12, 2009, from <http://www.paulocoelho.com.br/engl/>
- Paulo Coelho Bio. (n.d.). Retrieved November 15, 2009, from <http://www.santjordi-asociados.com/titles.htm>
- Skilleås, M. (2001). *Philosophy and literature: An introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Sukarata, M. (2009). *Filsafat [Philosophy]*. Surabaya: Revka Petra Media.
- Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1956). *Theory of literature* (New Revised Edition). New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Woodlief, A. (1990). *Criticism: Emerson and Thoreau as American prophets of eco-wisdom*. Paper presented at the Virginia Humanities Conference, Virginia, America. Retrieved November 12, 2009, from <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/criticism/ecotran.html>.
- Woodlief, A. (n.d.). *Emerson's nature: A river reading*. Retrieved January 10, 2010 from <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/criticism/eriver.html>.